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Lenape

CEREMONIAL GAMES

The Moccasin Game Ceremony

Tci·pa'zkwi nal·ə't·i·n "Moccasin Game."—Within recent 524 ●
generations, probably since the Delawares have resided in the west, as tradition notes, the Moccasin Game was played in this Nation as a pastime. But since the memory of the now living older people its performance as an amusement has stopped and the game has become associated only with the rites performed upon the occasion of funerals. Again disintegration of old customs has relegated its performance to nothing more than a memory, as we are told by Joe Washington that to his knowledge the last time this game had been carried out in connection with the funeral ceremony was about 1910. The Delaware form of this widespread Indian game ceremony is described from his memory in the following terms.

The Delawares played a moccasin game under the management of two men as leaders who were not members of the same ceremonial group (Tortoise, Wolf, Turkey) as the deceased person at whose funeral rite the performance took place. These men were usually the pall-bearers, and against them as opponents were two women of a similar classification. These pairs did the guessing for their respective sides. They built a fire in the stove and played the game all night. In the game four moccasins were provided by each side, and the object, a cartridge, small bone or a bullet, was hidden beneath the moccasins by each side in turn, the whereabouts of which was guessed at by the opposite side. The players, male and female, sat on opposite sides of the room in the house where the corpse lay. Each side had the four moccasins spread out side by side on the floor in front of its chief player. To one side sat the drummers who sang the moccasin game songs during the performance using the water-drum. Each side had its own songs which were sung by the drummers during

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●524 the time when it held the guessing hand. There was also a man appointed on each side to keep score by means of counter sticks. When the cartridge, bone or bullet was hidden by the leaders of one party, the leader of the opposite side had to guess under which moccasin it was concealed. The guessing was indicated by means of finger signs, a wave of the open hand to the right or to the left meant either of the end moccasins, by lowering the third finger of the pointing hand the third moccasin from the left was denoted, by lowering the first finger the second was indicated. The leaders, when the opposite side was guessing, endeavored to confuse their opponents by deceptive motions. Every time a successful guess was made as to the whereabouts of a hidden object, that is, under which of the four moccasins it had been concealed by the party holding the guess, a stick was placed on a pile by the score-keeper totaling the number of successful guesses of his party. The number of counters required to win is not now remembered. Every time that one side guessed successfully the particular moccasin under which the object was concealed, the turn to hide it reverted to the opposite side. And, with each inning completed, the men of the winning side rose and danced around the room once or twice to the tune of a victory song to celebrate its achievement. We have to note, however, that after the moccasin game had ceased to be an independent form of winter and spring amusement and had become attached to funeral celebrations, the dancing, after each winning period, was discontinued out of respect for the deceased. In the arrangement of the parties forming the two opposite sides of the game, one group faced east, the other west. It seems as though the game were a symbol of contest between the two opposing quarters and
[763] that an element of divination belonged to it. We are told in this connection that if the east side defeated the west side in the evening's performance it was a sign of coming misfortune; that some one in the company would die within the year. Washington added that this portent associated with the game was one of the causes for its discontinuation about twenty years ago. Some other details of the moccasin game

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among the Delawares are provided from his memory. They may serve as a base of comparison with the type of performance recorded among other tribes of the same cultural group when time comes to consider the history of the game. We learn, for instance, that the players started with four moccasins on each side but that towards morning the women took away one moccasin, leaving them three under which to hide the cartridge or bullet. Later, in the early hours of the morning another moccasin was taken away, later another until only one remained on each side and the players were unable to continue. One of the older women, Mrs. Minnie Fouts, who had taken part in this rite, corroborated the information of Joe Washington and added some of the details put on record. As the moccasins were taken away one by one during the course of the night, it was a signal for a change in the repertoire of songs in the series. It was added in explanation of taking away the moccasins that the men were induced to cease the game by this gradual method, lest they play too long. The element of wagering on the outcome of the moccasin game was stricken out when the game came to be used in the funeral rite, though previously betting was carried on by the Delawares when the game was an independent celebration for amusement. The reason for introducing the moccasin game into the funeral program was to provide a means of keeping the party awake and in good spirits while they were sitting up with the dead person during the nights between the time of decease and burial. Levity was customary during the playing of the game, yet this did not seem to interfere with the spirit of the funeral, it being intended to lighten the grief of those who were paying their last duties to the deceased.[1]

524 ● [525] [764] [781]

THE RING AND PIN GAME

Koko'lac (meaning not clear).—The following game, the name of which is not as descriptive as it might be although

[1] In the account of the Moccasin Game given by R. C. Adams ("Legends of the Delaware Indians," Washington, 1905, p. 47), some of the songs accompanying the rite are transcribed. It is doubtful whether any more of these scores could be secured at the present time.

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524 used to denote a game of extremely wide distribution throughout northern North America and retaining a uniform type wherever found, is common among the Delawares. At the present time it is played for amusement by persons of both sexes and all ages during the evenings in winter time. This, too, is regarded as a pastime for those who are born in winter, one that is thought to bring on cold stormy weather the ensuing day. Herein lies its ceremonial character.

To a sharpened stick or bone is fastened a leather string some twenty inches long at the other end of which is fixed the tail of a rabbit. On the string are threaded five hollow cones, the wider ends open toward the stick. For the want of sufficient native material the Delawares make these cones by hollowing out and tapering common spools. In former times they were the phalanges of the deer. In the specimens figured one is constructed with spools, the other with sections of some animals' leg bones. The object of the play is to swing the cones in the air, catching as many as possible on the end of the pointed stick. Each player repeats the attempt to impale these cones until he misses three times. For each cone caught on the stick he receives a count of one. The players keep count of their totals by memory. The winning total is decided upon at the beginning of the game, it may be 15, 25, 50 or 100 points. Small wagers are laid upon the [525] outcome, the player to reach the total first taking the stakes. To catch the rabbit's tail counts nothing.

[171] I hardly need comment upon the wide distribution of this game from the Pacific to the Atlantic and as far south as the Plains unbrokenly across North America, even in archaeological levels of considerable historical depth as Dr. Strong's findings indicate (Strong, op. cit., p. 192).

CEREMONIAL DOLLS

778 *Oxta's*, "Doll or Plaything."—The privilege of making dolls as toys out of cornhusks is denied children. The reason [777 753] is that corn is too sacred to be trifled with. To violate this would bring on bad luck in the form of sickness. Only those in whose family inheritance the obligation to make and to perform in ceremony with such creations are permitted to

+ = element present
− = element denied
(+) or (−) = source ambiguous
• = informant could not or would not say
§ = some, sometimes, or several
† or * = see Ethnographic Notes, pp. 79-137 for additional information

	Williams	Van der Donck	Lindestrom	Zeisberger	Heckewelder	Johnston	Pipe	Chipps	J. W.	W. T.	E. R.	W. L.
									524	525	526	738
419. War chief leaves war club at house of enemy chief to show desire for peace						−	−	+	•+	•	−	•
420. Delaware act part of mediators between other tribes						+	+	•	+	•	•	+
421. Terms of peace negotiated				+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Peace—Continued												
422. By village chiefs							+	+	+	+	+	+
423. By council							+				+	+
424. By persons appointed					+	+						
425. Ceremonies at conclusion of peace: Dancing		+				+	+	−	+	−	+	+
426. Feasts						−	•(+)	−	+	•+	+	+
427. Belts exchanged				+			+	+	+		+	+
428. Pipe smoked				+	+	+	−	+	+	+	+	+
429. Anything like flags of truce before whites					−	−	−		•+	•	+	•
430. Flags or armorial bearings					−	−	−	•	•	•	−	•
Games												
431. Ball play				+		•	+	+	−	+	−	−
432. Football	+					+	•	•	•+	•+	+	•+
433. Dice game	+			+		+	+	+	+	+	+	+
434. Number of colors				2		2	2	2	2	2	2	2
435. Number of dice				6		5-6	6	6	7	6	8	12
436. Cards	•+	•+		+		+		+	−	+	−	•+
437. Quoits				+					−	−	+	+
438. Wrestling				+		+		+	+	+	+	+
439. Racing	+					+		+	+	+	+	+
440. Jumping						+		+	+	+	+	+
441. Hopping						+			+	•+	+	+
442. Lifting stones				+					−	•+	+	+
443. Throwing stones				+					+	+	+	+
444. Shooting and throwing arrows									+	+	+	+
445. Fond of gambling	+	+		+		−		+	s	s	+	+

446. Indian in bearskin jumps from hole to hole while others shoot at him					–		–	–	–	–	–
447. Moccasin game †					+			+	+	+	+
Dances											
448. Engomween (Worshiping dance)			+		+	+		+	+	+	+
449. Linkaokon (common or corn dance)			+		+	+	+	+	+	·	+
450. Buffalo					+		+	·+	+	+	+
451. Begging					+		+	–	–	·	·
452. Bear					+			+	+	+	+
453. War (Skawseeokon)	+		+	+	+		+	·+	·+	·+	+
454. Co-coze-kon †			(+)		+			–	–	·	+
455. Peace			+					+	+	+	+
456. Dances for religious purposes: Engomween			(+)		+	+		+	+	+	+
457. Linkaokon			(+)		+	+	+	+	+	·	+
458. Dances for war ceremonies: War dance	+	+	+	+			+	+	+	+	+
459. Begging dance							+	·	·	·	·
460. Buffalo dance							+	+			–
461. Women participate in dancing			+		+		+	+	+	+	+
462. Excluded from war dance				+	+		·(+)	+	·	+	·+
463. Dance in circle			+		+		+	+	·+	·+	·+
464. Men in front			+		+		·	+	+	+	+
465. Women in rear			+		+		·	+	+	+	+
Music											
466. Instruments: Drum	–		+	+		+	+	+	+	+	+
467. Folded deerskins						+		+	+		+
468. Deerskin over frame or kettle			+					+	+	+	+
469. Rattle					+	+		+	+	+	+
470. Flute					+		+	·	+	+	+
471. Number of holes							6		6		8
472. Used by young men in courting					–				–		–
473. Different music for different occasions				+	–		+	+	+		+
474. Music for war ceremonies more solemn and impressive than for others				+			+	–	·	·	+
475. No ceremonial music except solo singing					+			–	–	·	–
476. Only nonsense or insignificant words in songs				–	+		+	–	–		–

533 534 716 721 535 524 536

9: Kinietz E-4, 5 (1938) 1946
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411 Oklahoma Delaware said that they had used the blowgun as boys and that, although the targets were usually birds or small [524] game, the blowgun was more of a toy than anything else. Since the sojourn of the ancestors of the Oklahoma Delaware in Ohio [171] and Indiana in the first decades of the nineteenth century is rather well documented and accounts of that period fail to record the possession of the blowgun then, it is more than probable that two sources of diffusion are here indicated. The Canadian Munsee or Delaware undoubtedly received the blowgun from the Southeast through the Iroquois, whereas the Oklahoma Delaware probably received it direct from the southeastern tribes with whom they have been neighbors in Oklahoma.

227 It is strange that in two years on the Delaware River Lindeström did not see spears, nets, or hooks used to take fish (313-15). All these were mentioned by Roger Williams as being used by the Narragansets and all but the spears were listed by Van der Donck in addition to weirs. These last, according to Lindeström, were the principal means used by the Delaware to take fish. Weirs were not mentioned by the second- or third-period sources and were unknown to the modern Delaware.

224 Large hunting parties were reported periodically for the Delaware in every period (316). However, there was considerable variation as to the number constituting a large party (317). E. R. said four hunters were as many as ever hunted together. This is quite diverse from the hundreds reported in the first period. The parties were formed for their mutual advantage and were under the guidance of the oldest or most expert hunter (319). Williams, Van der Donck, and Lindeström mentioned the driving of deer by large parties. Subsequent accounts did not mention game drives, and the report of smaller parties probably indicate that they were no longer made. Group hunting in the later periods was described by Johnston as a party of several families going together directed by a head man who encouraged the young men to pursue their hunting every morning and directed them where and when to move their camps. The ceremonies observed [796] in connection with group hunting were rather elaborate as described by Lindeström (see *post*, pp. 127-28). In the second and

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W. T.—Originally there was no war, hence no peace rules until after whites introduced war. William Penn made a treaty with the Delaware. The delegates (chief, assistant chief, war chief, and councilors) at this and later treaties, met, and talked things over, smoked just like businessmen do today. The white delegates were given food just like Indians always feed any visitors. At the Penn treaty they ate turkey. Thanksgiving day among the whites commemorates this first turkey feast. 721 728

429. Flag of truce

J. W. said that a flag of truce was something blue. 728

GAMES

432. Football

J. W. and W. T. said football was taken over recently from Shawnee. 526

W. L. said that the football game was played with the women against the men. There were two goal posts on the east side and two on the west. Each side tried to send the ball between the posts of the other side. The men had to kick the ball but the women could throw it. Once they appointed a man to help the women. He was mobbed and that was not tried again.

436. Cards

ROGER WILLIAMS reported a game like English cards in which rushes were used instead of cards. 525

VAN DER DONCK said that they played a game with pieces of reeds, resembling our card playing.

W. L. said that seven-up was the favorite game.

441. Hopping

W. T. stated that the game was to see who could cover the most ground in three hops. 524

442. Lifting stones

W. T. said that contests of lifting stones in the old days were really trials of the vision power of the different individuals, for 781 526

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781 in those days some through their power were able to lift stones
526 weighing over a thousand pounds with one hand.

447. Moccasin game

●524 JOHN JOHNSTON described the moccasin game as follows with-
525 out any mention of its connection with the wake of a deceased person:

Moccasin is commenced by placing a blanket or two upon the ground, placing four moccasins upon the blankets. A small ball is made use of. They draw cuts to know which party has the ball first. One of the party that it falls to hides it under one of those moccasins and one of the other party looks for it, if the ball is under the moccasin he first draws, he had found it, if not one of the same party hides it again and it counts one in their tally, or if he turns over last he has found it and one of his party hides it, but if it is not under the one he first draws or if he turns them up and it is not under the one that he turns up last, it is considered not found and the same party hides it. The party that has the ball to hide sings and the other party is silent. For their tally they use three balls or sticks and every time the ball is hid and not found by the other party, one of those balls or sticks is given to the party that hid it until the three come together which is game and the party that has the balls has beat. They agree how many games they will play for the property that is at stake. They frequently make large bets upon this kind of game especially when one tribe plays against another.

All the modern informants reported this game being played only the night before a funeral.

DANCES

448 and 449. Worshiping and common or corn dance

535 JOHN JOHNSTON—They had originally but two and one of them has been described in their mode of worship the other is conducted in similar manner, but they think of less consequence. At this dance the men all dance in front, the women in the rear in a single file at this dance. They have two that sing and beat